

Sickle Cell Testing Saving Lives

September is National Sickle Cell Awareness Month

When Quintissa Peake was born in 1981, sickle cell disease testing was not a mandatory newborn screening test. Her parents took her to her pediatrician because she was cranky, fussy, irritable and didn't want to move very much.

"She was not feeling well, running high fevers and generally sluggish. They were only focused on bringing down the temperature," said her mother, Rosa Peake. "It wasn't until later that they started treating the pain, because they didn't initially know what they were dealing with."

"After exhausting all other tests, it was suggested that we, as parents, be tested for sickle cell," she said. "Later, it was detected that we were both trait carriers."

It wasn't until Quintissa Peake was 11 months old that she was officially diagnosed with sickle cell disease.

September is National Sickle Cell Awareness Month. Sickle cell disease is the most common genetic disease in the United States. The Kentucky Newborn Screening Program began screening Kentucky babies for sickle cell disease in 1990. The blood is collected at birth and can show if a baby has the disease, sickle cell trait or other abnormal hemoglobin disorders.

Hemoglobin is the part of the red blood cells that helps to move oxygen through the blood in the body. These red blood cells normally are round. But sickle red blood cells are shaped like a sickle or banana and become hard, pointy and sticky, making it hard for blood to flow. These cells can clog the flow and break apart, which causes pain for individuals with this disease.

Over 70,000 Americans have sickle cell disease. One in 12 African-Americans in the United States carries the sickle cell trait; about 1 in 375 will have the actual disease. African-Americans are not the only people that can have sickle cell. Arabs, Greeks, Italians, Latin Americans and people from India may also have sickle cell.

"In Kentucky, we screened 54,688 babies in 2005 and we had eight positive cases for sickle cell disease," said Sandy Fawbush, a registered nurse with the Kentucky Department for Public Health's Newborn Screening Program. "In 2004, out of 53,987 screened, there were seven confirmed cases."

Children develop sickle cell disease when the sickle cell gene is inherited from both parents. Peake's parents both carried the trait. There is a 25 percent chance when both parents carry the sickle cell gene that their child will be affected by the disease. Peake's two younger sisters do not have sickle cell disease.

Sickle cell disease can cause serious health problems. The most serious problems are infection, anemia (fewer than normal red blood cells), and harm to body organs because the flow of red blood cells throughout the body has been disrupted and painful episodes or pain occurs.

Peake, who cannot recall a pain-free day, said she has constant joint pain throughout her body and has to be careful to prevent a crisis episode.

"In April, I was hospitalized for three weeks because I had pneumonia and then came down with a staph infection," she said.

She was out at least 10 weeks before returning to work. She only worked three weeks before being hospitalized again in July for a week.

Sickle cell disease has not kept Peake from enjoying life. She participated in basketball and cheerleading when she was younger. Her parents never sheltered her from the disease.

While she tries to stay hydrated and rested, she avoids extreme temperature changes and reduces stress levels to keep the disease under control. Altitude changes can also affect sickling, so when she travels by plane she always carries a letter stating she has sickle cell disease and what to do in case of an emergency.

Peake lived in Letcher County as a child and made many trips to Kosair's Children's Hospital in Louisville for treatment. When she turned 18, she was no longer eligible for the hospital's pediatric care.

"When I started attending the University of Kentucky, I was placed under the care of a hematologist/oncologist (Philip DeSimone) at the Markey Center," said Peake. "I started a newer treatment, Hydrea (hydroxyurea), that increases the amount of fetal hemoglobin in the blood and causes the blood not to sickle as much. It is much better for me."

Peake has become an advocate for people donating blood. She has been featured in a commercial for the Central Kentucky Blood Center. So far, she has had 157 units of blood and will need occasional transfusions for the rest of her life.

Peake believes newborn screening is the key for parents. Much progress has been made in the identification and care of a person with sickle cell disease. The most dramatic progress has been in the area of early identification and treatment in children with sickle cell disease.

"As a parent, I would suggest that other parents seek out more information and become knowledgeable on the disease," said Rosa Peake. "By working with your child's pediatrician, you can educate each other, you with information about your child, and the doctor on information about sickle cell."

For more information, visit <http://www.sicklecelldisease.org/index.phtml> or call the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America at (800) 421-8453.

Governor Proclaims September Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month

Governor Ernie Fletcher has proclaimed September Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month in Kentucky, with many events planned statewide to educate and inform Kentuckians about the impact of suicide on the commonwealth.

“Kentucky has the 12th highest rate of suicide in the nation,” said Governor Fletcher. “The impact of suicide on our citizens – both victims and survivors – is tragic. Learning to talk openly and honestly about suicide and educating ourselves about prevention can preserve our state’s future and ensure good mental health for all of our citizens.”

Many events will take place during National Suicide Prevention Week, Sept. 10-16, designed to raise awareness about the dangers of suicide and to increase prevention efforts across the nation. Events are planned to inform Kentuckians about the prevalence of suicide, educate about prevention, and reduce suicide rates in the state.

“Awareness and knowledge are the most powerful tools we have in curbing suicide rates,” said Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Mark D. Birdwhistell. “I want to encourage more Kentuckians to educate themselves about suicide and get involved in prevention efforts. Far too many Kentuckians have fallen victim or lost a loved one to this tragedy.”

According to the Department for Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an average of 502 suicide deaths has occurred in the state per year since 1981. In 2003, suicide deaths outnumbered homicide deaths 3 to 1. In Kentucky, suicide is the second leading cause of death for people age 15 to 34; third for people age 10 to 14; and fourth for those age 35 to 54.

“Experts believe most suicidal individuals do not want to die, they just want to end the pain they are experiencing,” said Jason Padgett, the state’s suicide prevention coordinator. “According to the American Association of Suicidology, when suicidal intent or risk is detected early, lives can be saved.”

Warning signs a person may be considering suicide include when someone:

- Threatens to hurt or kill him/herself, or talks of wanting to hurt or kill him/herself
- Looks for ways to kill him/herself by seeking access to firearms, available pills or other means
- Talks or writes about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person
- Exhibits hopelessness, rage, uncontrolled anger or seeks revenge
- Acts reckless or engages in risky activities, seemingly without thinking
- Feels trapped, like there’s no way out
- Increases alcohol or drug use

- Withdraws from friends, family and society
- Exhibits anxiety or agitation
- Is unable to sleep or sleeps all the time
- Experiences dramatic mood changes
- Says there is no reason for living; no sense of purpose in life

If someone exhibits these signs, he or she needs immediate help. A concerned friend or family member can take action by contacting a mental health professional or by calling 800-273-TALK (8255) for a referral. For more information on suicide prevention, visit the Kentucky Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation's Web site at <http://mhmr.ky.gov/mhsas/kspg.asp>; or contact Jason Padgett at (502)564-4456 or Jason.padgett@ky.gov.

Events for Suicide Prevention Awareness in Kentucky

Local proclamation of Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month, 9 a.m., Sept. 1, Bowling Green City Hall, 1001 College St. Contact Evelyn Libe at (270) 901-5000, ext. 1256, or e-mail elibe@lifeskills.com; or contact Katie Scheuer at (270) 586-8826 or kscheuer@likeskills.com.

Candlelight vigil followed by the Lee Eric Drake Foundation Concert, 5-7 p.m., Sept. 7, Bowling Green Fountain Square Park. Contact Evelyn Libe at (270) 901-5000, ext. 1256, or e-mail elibe@lifeskills.com; Katie Scheuer at (270) 586-8826 or kscheuer@likeskills.com; or Kelly Bush at (615) 355-2299 or Kelly.Bush@leericdrake.com.

Northern Kentucky National Suicide Prevention Week Event, 2 p.m., Campbell County Cooperative Extension Office, 3500 Alexandria Pike, Highland Heights. Contact Denis Walsh at (859) 578-3204 or dwalsh@northkey.org; or Sue Davis at (859) 491-0089 or sdavis@northkey.org.

Louisville Suicide Prevention Week Event, 2-5:30 pm, Westport Road Church of Christ, 4500 Westport Road, Louisville. Contact Micheal McFarland at (502) 544-7663 or mcfarland.m@insightbb.com; or Dr. Julia Richerson at jricherson@fhclouisville.org.

Suicide Prevention: It's Everybody's Business, 10 a.m. to noon Sept. 15, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Frankfort. Contact Jason Padgett at (502) 564-4456 or jason.padgett@ky.gov.

Out of the Darkness Community Walk 5K, 4 p.m., Sept. 30, Ashland Central Park. Contact Paula K. Rymer at (606) 836-7966 or paulakrymer@aol.com.

Extra! Extra! Learn All About It!

The Office of Human Resource Management is committed to building and sustaining a positive work environment for all Cabinet employees and would like to inform employees of a free resource now available.

The Division for Professional and Organizational Development has developed presentations and trainings to share with other team members.

Visit the [OHRM Internal Learning Web Page](#) to:

- Learn how to analyze and solve problems using a Pareto Chart.
- Read “Instructional Theory into Practice” and discover the styles of learning you and/or your team exhibit.
- MANAGERS: Read about the process involved during the Cabinet’s Annual Employee Evaluation Audit. Pay special attention to the areas on which the audit concentrates and the reasons why.
- Learn how to complete a mail merge.
- Get tips for Outlook (i.e., Out-of-Office-Assistant, Voting Options, etc.).

What are you waiting for? Visit the [OHRM Internal Learning Web Page](#) and take advantage of this free resource.

Focus Health Tip of the Week

Nutritionally, fish is one of the best foods you can eat. But keeping yourself healthy while eating fish begins way before the food enters your mouth. Follow these tips for eating safe seafood.

- Buy only from reputable sources.
- Buy only fresh seafood that is refrigerated or properly iced.
- Don’t buy cooked seafood, such as shrimp, crabs or smoked fish, if displayed in the same case as raw fish. Cross-contamination can occur.
- Don't buy frozen seafood if the packages are open, torn or crushed on the edges. Avoid packages that are above the frost line in the store’s freezer. If the package cover is transparent, look for signs of frost or ice crystals. This could mean that the fish has either been stored for a long time or thawed and refrozen.
- Put seafood on ice, in the refrigerator or in the freezer, immediately after buying it.
- Recreational fishers who plan to eat their catch should follow state and local government advisories about fishing areas and eating fish from certain areas.

How to Tell if the Fish is Fresh:

- The fish’s eyes should be clear and bulge a little. Only a few fish, such as walleye, have naturally cloudy eyes.
- Whole fish and fillets should have firm and shiny flesh. Dull flesh may mean the fish is old. Fresh whole fish also should have bright red gills free from slime.

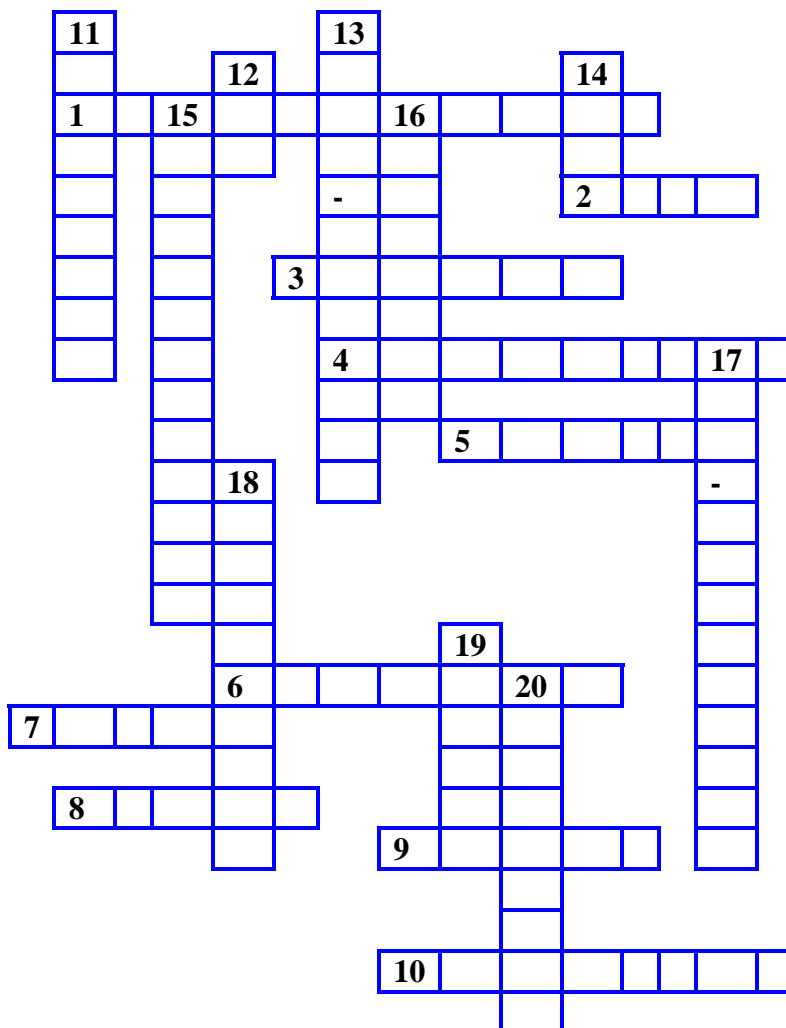
- If the flesh doesn't spring back when pressed, the fish isn't fresh.
- There should be no darkening around the edges of the fish or brown or yellowish discoloration.
- The fish should smell fresh and mild, not fishy or ammonia-like.

Test Your Employee Recognition Skills

By Maranda Cummins

Would you like to test your Employee Recognition knowledge? Maybe you just need a refresher. Perhaps you have no Employee Recognition knowledge but would like to learn. Try completing the Employee Recognition Puzzle.

Hints to some of the answers to the puzzle can be found in previous [Employee Recognition Tips](#) that have been published in the Focus. Be sure to catch the answers in next week's Focus.



ACROSS

1. Webster defines this word as gratitude.
2. Resources for employee development such as books, videos & CDS.
3. Former Secretary of Defense said _____ goes where they are appreciated.
4. ERC Chair Member
5. ERC wants each employee to be what?
6. Something everyone needs and deserves.
7. A simple gesture to recognize employees.
8. ERC wants what to be heard?
9. What the ERC Mission wants for each CHFS employee.
10. Two words that are very important in recognition.

DOWN

1. ERC "Adorned Fellow Employees" with this.
2. _____ Nelson wrote "1001 ways to reward employees".
3. One way you can recognize employees is to send him/her a _____-_____ thank you note.
4. KDLA will messenger-mail _____-related materials to state employees.
5. ERC wants each employee to be recognized for what?
6. For the May Health Fair, fellow employees could be recognized where?
7. Books for personal use must be checked out the _____-_____ way.
8. What do you make by joining the ERC?
9. What the ERC would like to have from each department.
10. Research shows that recognized work is _____.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

When you're working on deadline and are interrupted by a coworker or customer who needs your help, you don't have to say "no" if they can accept "not right now." Give them an alternative to your working for them immediately. Explain that you are working on deadline and offer to assist when you can give their project your full attention. Or clear it

with a willing colleague to defer the work to him or her. Be sure to return the favor when you can lend them a hand.